

The following letter came to our hands several days ago but was inadvertently mislaid.

To the Editors of the *Lexington Journal*:—A reader of this Journal desires to know if the following statement is true: In what respect would a peaceful separation of the free and slave States injure the confederacy? Is it that the slaves would be lost to the publican form of government? Is it that the slaves that the present war will wreck the whole fabric of the confederacy? Is it that the slaves would never accept a restoration of the Union with slavery in it?

This inquiry has been addressed to our country since the formation of the constitution which did not destroy the constitution; would it injure it to do so?

We suppose our correspondent of course means by a "peaceable separation" of the free and slave States" a separation by a voluntary treaty of peace with the armed supporters of the right of secession. If so, does his question is a purely speculative one, without any actual relation to the present state of affairs, and not worth discussing. If he does, as is doubtless the case, we answer that such a separation would injure the confederacy in two ways. And here we beg our correspondent to pardon us if in relation to the points he mentions we but state our views without stopping at present to develop them at length. The rebellion is waged in behalf of state sovereignty against the sovereignty of the nation,—in behalf of the right under the constitution to secede, a state withdraws from the Union at pleasure with out cause named. Every state is now in except one acceded this right formally and explicitly in the act of withdrawal. In short, the rebellion is the armed embodiment of the conventional right of secession. A voluntary treaty of peace on the basis of the acknowledgement of the independence of the seceding states would be a virtual acknowledgement of the right thus asserted. It would implant the principle of secession in the constitution. This is one of the ways in which such a separation would injure the confederacy. The point of view, however, which has been brought into the consideration by the separation itself, would be strengthened and quickened by the necessary consequences of the separation. The American Union, owing chiefly to its historical and geographical characteristics, is a political being, a living, a social organism, a political entity, and, consequently, the preservation of its integrity is the condition of not merely the welfare but the peace of the constituent states. War and the ultimate extinction of freedom would follow separation as inevitably as convulsions and death follow the cleaving of the human body. Every severed limb, every act of the great body politic would be a source of ailing and pain, and an outlet of liberating and of power. The life and the peace of the government would flow out through the same horrid channels until strength of either should submit. Separation is anarchy, which, under the circumstances the most auspicious to freedom, is the parent of despotism, but, in the midst of a raging war such as will rise from the permanent separation of this Union, despotism would issue in full panoply from the folds of anarchy, as Minerva leaped from the brain of Jupiter. The "constitution" would be expanded, and "our free republican form of government" extinguished. Separation in any form and in any event would sooner or later come to this, but the separation mentioned by our correspondent would hurry on the catastrophe with bewildering rapidity. It would prove a double shock to the government. It would vitiate the constitution at the same time that it rendered the national territory. It would damage the head whilst it dismembered the body. It would crowd the unavoidable horrors of separation within a narrower compass, making the thralldoms of the government sharper and shorter. This is our answer to the first two questions of our correspondent.

In relation to the last two, we have to say that we do not deem it "probable" that the present war will wreck the "old fabric," and that in our opinion the President is honestly bending his whole energies to effect a "restoration of the Union with slavery in it." There is no telling, however, that "the present war" shall "wreck the whole fabric," and if it should, the calamity would be owing mainly to the depravity or incapacity of our public men. We are no defenders of slavery, but we are convinced we defend its constitutional rights. The citizens cease to be the founders of murder? The citizens cease to be loyal when he advocates "youth law on a small scale or on a grand scale." This is the resort logical. We command it to such as are honest in their radicalism. "It is plain," our contemporary says in conclusion, "that an Act of Confiscation or a Proclamation of martial law is the only proper source of war." The present would doubtless be the most appropriate for the terrible dagger. On their heads principally would fall the resulting accountability. The war would have to be prosecuted. The people are conservative and radical. We are as convinced in the President. And with the people and the President on the right side, we may, even if the world should come to the worse in respect to the other authorities, still hold the Government firm in the path of the constitution and of glorious maintained victory. Nay, we are not willing to confess that the cause would be altogether lost if the people stood alone. We believe the necessity which calls for the preservation of the Union is all but unconquerable. But the President will stand by the people and by the constitution. It is his fixed resolution. It is to we believe the cherished purpose of his heart. We are assured indeed that Congress also will stand by them in the end. We cannot be ourselves to doubt it. On the whole, the evidence that the war will be carried on hereafter as it has been carried on heretofore, so far as spirit and purpose are concerned, is eminently gratifying to the patriot. And this gratifying evidence grows stronger every day by day. We may not feel quite confident that this is not a loyal Congressional district which will reproduce its Representatives. It is well for the Government to interfere with this dictatorial and admirable machinery for the diffusion of intelligence.

The proposition introduced by Mr. Colfax to compel all newspapers to be carried by mail instead of express companies or on railroad trains would meet with no objection if the mails were able to do the work according to the public requirements. The Post-Office Department has, however, a plan that perfectly accords with this, and it is to be hoped that the Government will be able to make adequate provision for its payment. Our revenue from custom houses is greatly centralized, and from the sale of public lands entirely suspended; we must therefore resort to taxation as the only way to keep up the credit of the nation. At present, however, there is no way to secure an income from taxation, and the war should not be followed by taxation, but we feel very confident that this is not a loyal Congressional district which will reproduce its Representatives should he correct his blunder, and, while voting men and money to any extent required to preserve the government, vote also for some judicious system of taxation which will place the public credit on a stable foundation.

Political delays frequently prevent great loss of life, while impetuosity will sacrifice human life. We draw consolation from the "unimpartial freedom" of some of our friends from the following incident. When the English and Provincial forces lay before Lourdes, in the old French war, General Wolfe, impatient of delay, said to General Ambert, in command:

"Sir, if you will allow me, I will take Lourdes in a fortnight, without the loss of more than a thousand men." The reply was—"I will take it in six weeks without the loss of one man," and he did so.

Soldiers can probably consume more also-leather than any other class of people—except collectors for newspapers.

THE MILL SPRING VICTORY!

Dispatches from General Thomas to the Headquarters of General Buell report the capture of four thousand pieces of cannon and four thousand hundred muskets.

The rebel steamboat which has been engaged in the transportation of arms and munitions at the expense of the Government at the expiration of twenty years, and also a small tax on the circulation of the banknotes, has been so amplified, showing the quantities of ale, bear, and distilled spirits produced, which it appears that the consumption of malt liquors is 3,200,000 gallons to each person in the United States, and the rate of distilled liquors is over three gallons annually to the rebel States. It recommends an excise duty on liquors, tobacco, &c., and a high import duty on tea, coffee, sugar, and liquors, and prevents the importation of the British manufacturer, showing that, of the three hundred and nine thousand of tobacco, tea, and distilled liquors were from foreign and thirty-five millions from stamp.

The writer contends that by issuing an order to the rebels to burn his camp has been much exaggerated.

The following are the latest dispatches received at headquarters:

SOMERSET, Jan. 21.

The route of the enemy was complete. After succeeding in getting two pieces of artillery across the river, and upwards of fifty wagons, he was descended with all the ammunition in the depot at Mill Spring. The three hundred and nine thousand of tobacco, tea, and distilled liquors were from foreign and thirty-five millions from stamp.

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BATTLE OF MILL SPRING.—A letter from General Zollicoffer—A battle fought on the 19th instant for the rebels to burn his camp has been much exaggerated.

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